



Visual Arts Workshops 2003-2004

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Copyright: protecting a tangible medium

- Painting
- Music
- Sculpture
- Drawing
- Sketch

You cannot copyright an idea or plans for a creation.

Copyright is attached to your tangible medium the moment it is created – even if it is unfinished, it is copyrighted.

Your protections for copyright attach at the moment you fill out the copyright form.

Copyright expires 70 years after your death, but the heirs can renew it.

Copyright is hard and very expensive to enforce. If you are going to sue someone for stealing your creation, you have to cite damages: opportunity costs.

Why register your copyright?

To provide evidence to the government and the public. If you register your photo and someone who took the same picture as you (even without intention) doesn't register theirs, you have the advantage.

If there's ever an argument as to when you created an artwork, take a picture of it, stamp it in a sealed envelope and mail it to yourself – your solid evidence is on the postmark date.